

Our soul intention for this e-newsletter is to create a positive, uplifting, inspiring and spirit-filled message (in amongst the conventionally-perceived journalism practiced today). We extend this offering to you and hope, if only for a moment in time, we provide a hint of another reality that is there for your embracing. Enjoy!

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You are invited to share this e-newsletter with those family, friends, colleagues and acquaintances you think may be interested.

In this e-Newsletter...

SPIRITUAL GUIDANCE OFFERINGS:.....	2
1. Personal Story of Spiritual Lessons.....	2
2. Poem	3
3. Quote or Question.....	3
CONTRIBUTING SPIRITUAL GUIDES AND TEACHERS:.....	4
4. Regiena Heringa – Notes from the Light – May 2018.....	4
OTHER GIFTS AND E-NEOSWORTHY ITEMS:	6
5. Good News Of The Day	6
6. Listening As An Act of Transformation	11
7. Everything Is Waiting For You.....	12
8. Seven Stages of the Ego	13
9. Recycling Karmic Trash	14
10. Lek Chilert of Elephant Nature Park	15
11. HumanKinda	15
12. The Story of Kaveri (and Every River Everywhere).....	15
13. Paint the World.....	16
HEART AND SOUL ADVERTISEMENTS:.....	17
14. Sacred Attention Therapy	17
15. A Course in Miracles Global Community Centre.....	17

If you have a newsworthy item that you would like added to the e-newsletter, please forward your submission to newsletter@servingyourjourney.com.

SPIRITUAL GUIDANCE OFFERINGS:

1. Personal Story of Spiritual Lessons



No like, no respect...no matter

Growing up as a child all I wanted to be was 'liked.' This desire carried over into my adolescent years. I would do things, and do things for others out of a longing to belong, fit in, and be liked. As a child, the idea of being respected was not yet in my vocabulary or understanding.



As I moved into adulthood, as I strove for accomplishment in this world, my focus shifted from wanting to be liked to wanting to be 'respecting.' I still hung on to vestiges of wanting to be liked, but I was more concerned now with being respected. I wanted people to listen to me. I wanted people to do what I told them. Underneath it all was a thin veil over my secret desire to control people. I unconsciously equated their respect as my ticket to control them.



At this stage in my life, I no longer desire for people to like me or respect me. Of course, it is nice when someone likes and / or respects me. Striving to be liked or respected is of no interest to me anymore. This lack of interest in whether or not someone likes or respects me has come with the awareness and acceptance that whatever someone thinks about me is none of my business. Equally, what someone says about me is none of my business.

It has been suggested that the preceding is an indication that I have grown to become more comfortable in my own skin. Perhaps. It feels more like simply accepting and loving myself like never before.

I am becoming more aware that all I want is peace in my life. And I know that I cannot find that peace outside of me from anyone or anything else. I can only find this peace within me. And I know that if I strive for being liked or respected, I will not find my peace, because either striving takes me away from my core, my altar, my place of peace.



In love, gratitude, compassion and forgiveness...

Rev. Robert Meagher

2. Poem

Surrender

And I asked, "What is the secret of
total surrender to God?"

And I was told,
"The secret of surrender is simply
to be.
The secret of surrender is simply
not to think.
It is letting perception gently
dissolve into the knowledge of Love,
the land of no change,
the Kingdom of God.
It is hearing the waves tenderly
kiss the surf,
becoming united, becoming one.
It is perception dissolving
into knowledge of the perfect
one-essence of God and Love.
The secret of surrender is simply
to do nothing and to be."

Gerald G. Jampolsky

3. Quote or Question

Don't compare your life to others. You have no idea what their journey is all about.

~ Anonymous

CONTRIBUTING SPIRITUAL GUIDES AND TEACHERS:

Spiritual Guidance is honored to collaborate with other Spiritual Guides and Teachers to serve your personal journey toward enlightenment. If you would like to be a contributing Spiritual Guide and Teacher to this e-newsletter, please contact Spiritual Guidance (our contact information is at the very bottom of this e-newsletter).

4. Regiena Heringa – Notes from the Light – May 2018

The Advancement of your World—Attitudes

What is going to happen to your world? This is a question which frequently moves through the minds and hearts of your people.

We, interplanetary and inter-dimensional guests in your world, have no firm answer to this question for it is to be remembered that the attitude of your earth citizens may change very rapidly. When we speak of attitude, we speak of the psychological stance of your peoples. If this stance is based on the language of the heart, then the position created is one of reverence and your world is enlightened.

From our perspective, your people are growing in the understanding of greater laws which transcend the social rulings and mores of your earth societies. Greater laws are those which encompass the well-being of all life including all citizens in the universe. From your point of view, chaos seems to rule in your world. Yet, if you observe the orderly fashion and the intricate design of your physical bodies and your material world, you witness the complex organization and noble interconnectedness within each particle, each cell and each cluster of matter which transcend your time. You witness here a respectful fellowship assuring mutual growth.

Indeed, in all material universes of which there are more than you can possibly count, and in the cosmos itself, there is an enormous creativity which is born in an orderly yet open-ended fashion.

It is important for you, gentle citizens of Planet Earth, to comprehend that you have within you a mighty system of life. Imagine your body, mind and soul as a miniature universe—the soul as the central sun around which your body and mind gravitate. As you rotate around your soul, you realize its tremendous strength and gravitational pull. In increasing your awareness of your soul—this inner divinity—you begin to transform your mind and your body. Your attitude changes to become rooted in Spirit—in the Creator—where it belongs. In this manner, you may participate in an exceptional planetary opportunity as it opens and expands to offer you a far greater and more inclusive reality than that of your present world.

Currently upon your earth the direction of growth of your inhabitants is changing as it is increasingly being navigated by the sacred intelligence from within all of you. Should this direction strengthen, your planet and its citizens will live in an elevated manner similar to our own.

Hence, what you may perceive as chaos moving throughout your world, we perceive as a wave of honesty and fairness founded on the attitude of the heart.

We ask you, with kindness and foresight, to continue with lives of reverence and loving creativity. In so doing, the resurrection of a supremely holy and intelligent vibration which permeates the very rock of your Planet Earth will again make all things whole.



ABOUT THE SPIRITUAL GUIDE AND TEACHER: Regiena Heringa is a spiritual teacher, counselor and messenger and co-founder of the Institute for Spiritual Unfoldment and Interworld Studies (ISUIS). Through her writings, meditations groups, teaching, music and painting, and in concert with those beings of higher vibrational dimensions, Regiena facilitates the expansion of mind and heart in all who wish to participate in the creation of the sacred new world. For more information, kindly visit ISUIS at www.nextagemission.com or write Regiena at rheringa@bell.net.

OTHER GIFTS AND E-NEWSWORTHY ITEMS:

5. Good News Of The Day

The stories below are reprinted from www.dailygood.org.

One day, Meredith Sabini found a large dumpster in front of her neighbor's house, packed with all her treasures and belongings. The widow had passed on and her family members quickly loaded her possessions and left the dumpster behind. Ms. Sabini, founder of The Dream Institute of Northern California in Berkeley whose mission is to restore the dream as a cultural resource, muses: "It is common these days to lament how materialistic we have become, but I do not believe this is accurate. It seems to me that we have not yet begun to value matter. Much that is made today is not intended to last... We may ask where objects come from, but they no longer have stories to tell. They too have lost their roots. How, then, are we to leave tangible mementoes of ourselves when we go? What will be left to caress?" { [read more](#) } **Be The Change:** What would it mean to look at the things you own as if they had a soul? Consider any family heirlooms, or possessions that have been with you for a long time -- what stories do they carry?

Nickelodeon, in partnership with KidsRights Foundation, has just launched #KidsCan, an international campaign to spotlight the stories of nine International Children's Peace Prize winners and nominees from around the globe who are creating positive change in their communities. Says Bradley Archer-Haynes, a vice president, at Nickelodeon International, "Kids everywhere have the power to make a difference, regardless of age or location. We wanted to provide a platform to help amplify their stories, while pointing to resources that help young people remember they can do anything." From Kehkashan's efforts for environmental sustainability to Fahima's work with child homelessness, these children's stories shine a beacon of guiding light for other children seeking to become the change they want to see in the world. For more, visit the Together For Good campaign hub. <http://www.dailygood.org/story/1996/kidscan-children-changing-the-world-shari-swanson/> **Be The Change:** How can you help others? Consider your gifts, talents, and preferred methods of engagement in answering this question. Kids and others might enjoy taking the personality quiz put together by KidsRights to help them answer. <http://www.dailygood.org/more.php?n=7660a>

Anne Firth Murray, a professor at Stanford University, teaches courses on international women's health and one called, "Love as a Force of Social Justice." In this interview, she describes introducing students to the different concepts of love, empowering them to be conscious of the power of love and the possibility of practicing it in every day life, and highlighting the idea of love as a force for social justice. Drawing on the works and inspiration of Mahatma Gandhi, Thich Nhat Hanh, Rumi, bell hooks, Martin Luther King, Jr., and others, she is on an unwavering pursuit of truth and nonviolent action using love as a tool for change. Her course brings her students along with her. <http://www.dailygood.org/story/1953/can-love-be-a-force-for-social-justice-bela-shah/> **Be The Change:** For 14 days, look for and experience small acts of kindness and love in your life. If you don't witness an act of love on any given day, perform one no matter how small. Write a journal entry every day to commemorate the what you saw or did.

Imagine if you loved yourself fully, with the same compassion and tenderness you reserved for others. What would this look like? What would it mean? Self-love is a gift we can bestow upon ourselves each day. "As much as we say I love you to another, we can say it to ourselves. We can say these three words frequently, and we can say them with the reverence for which they are meant." In this moving essay, writer Emily Barr explores how we can turn toward ourselves with gentleness and open hearts, and the profound impact this can have on our relationships with others. <http://www.dailygood.org/story/1994/the-love-you-seek-emily-rose-barr/>

Be The Change: Write a love letter to yourself. Keep it in a place where you can read it regularly and soak in the love you bear for yourself.

When master biographer Walter Isaacson sits down to chat with bestselling author Adam Grant, he shares secrets and insights on the inner and outer lives of great innovators like Benjamin Franklin, Albert Einstein, Steve Jobs, and Leonardo da Vinci. Who was a misfit? Who was a perfectionist? Who had a notebook full of unfinished projects? What did they have in common? In this fascinating conversation, Isaacson and Grant explore the roles that curiosity, creativity, teambuilding, self-knowledge, kindness, and cruelty had in the success of these great men, and draw connections to life and work today.

<http://www.dailygood.org/story/1937/the-benefits-of-being-a-misfit-knowledge-wharton/> **Be The Change:**

Start a notebook of ideas, dreams, quotes, poems. . . keep your imagination alive.

In contemporary society, bigger is better: bigger homes, bigger salaries, bigger acts, bigger influences. But what about all the small acts carried out each day by those who remain invisible to the masses? Are their intentions deemed less worthy, their outcomes less significant? In this inspiring essay, author Charles Eisenstein challenges the belief that in order to leave an imprint, our actions must be far-reaching and yield great returns. Instead, he argues, by scaling down, even the simplest encounters and undertakings can generate profound change. "For me, scaling down implies a kind of trust that it is okay to do just this, right here, right now. Letting go of controlling the macroscopic outcome, action becomes a kind of prayer, a kind of aligning oneself with the world one wants to see." <http://www.dailygood.org/story/1976/scale-in-the-story-of-interbeing-charles-eisenstein/> **Be The Change:** During the coming week, take note of the small acts you do each day. At the end of the week, review your findings. Which stand out to you? Which are the most meaningful to you personally, and which do you think will be meaningful in the years to come? Share your thoughts in the comments section below.

How often, in a moment of stark clarity, have you asked yourself "How did I get to this place?" and then "Now what?". This short beautiful poem by Mark Nepo unfolds just such a moment with compassion for the journey and peace in the answer. Stop whatever you believe you must hurry to do next, and give yourself the gift of sitting with this poem for a moment or a lifetime. <http://www.dailygood.org/story/1902/where-to-now-mark-nepo/>

Be The Change: Take time today to pause and consider your life as it is unfolding in this moment. What do you see?

One school in India is helping to counter the impact of intense academic pressure, high parental expectations, and extreme social and economic barriers students often face, by implementing outlets for gratitude, mindfulness, self-compassion, and more. Seth M. R. Jaipuria School, led by Anjali Jaipuria features a Garden of Kindness, Let It Go Pond, Gratitude Tree, and other spaces in which pre-k through grade 12 students can tap into their own humanity and vulnerability, while inspiring others to do the same. The practices have had a tremendous impact on students and teachers, who quickly find themselves in a more accepting, forgiving environment where differences are celebrated and similarities are abundant. Based on Greater Good Science Center practices, the school has given students the gift of being "seen and valued for who they are by their teachers, their peers, and by their own selves." <http://www.dailygood.org/story/1655/what-a-greater-good-school-looks-like-vicki-zakrzewski/> **Be The Change:** What are some practices you can implement in your own life to foster gratitude, forgiveness, and self-compassion? Share your thoughts in the comments section below.

Driving home from school, I spotted this young man with a shopping cart. I stopped and asked, "How would you like a loaf of bread my kids at school just made?" He was so grateful and said, My wife and I will really appreciate that. It was heartbreaking. So I said, Why don't you take these, too? He said, Are you sure somebody else wouldn't want them? The next day I told the kids and the whole room just exploded! Right on, Ms. Farrell! Right on! Lets do this again! These kids have a kind of awareness. This gem of a teacher shares the kinds of stories we need to hear. <http://www.conversations.org/story.php?sid=255> **Be The Change:**

After reading this, take a few minutes to see what helpful new idea might come up for you as something to keep in mind, or brainstorm, with a child you know.

The gift of organizational change is its ability to simplify complex concepts and inspire the exercise of freedom and creativity. Its goal is to create a future worth wanting. Although now 20 years old, in this article Wheatley and Kellner-Rogers' suggest four principals, three rules of engagement and four questions to ask that are more relevant than ever. <http://www.dailygood.org/story/1930/bringing-life-to-organizational-change-margaret-wheatley-myron-kellner-roger/> **Be The Change:** Engage with these 8 fearless questions to discover what might be keeping you from making changes for creating a future worth wanting. <http://www.dailygood.org/more.php?n=7583a>

When a CIA analyst began an interfaith quest for citizen diplomacy by standing shoulder to shoulder with a veiled woman, and listening to the Imam ask, "Don't we all bleed when we're hurt?" she was grateful to be praying alongside Muslims instead of interrogating them in Afghanistan for the CIA after 9/11. She continues to work with Muslim communities in the belief that peace in the Middle East can only emerge from small, grassroots efforts. Politicians could profit from her story... <http://www.dailygood.org/story/1666/the-very-best-way-to-pray-for-peace-janessa-gans-wilder/> **Be The Change:** In any situation of violence there's the possibility of discovering that we are all human beings in need of love and attention. Find someone today who puts you off, and climb into their shoes for a little while to have an experience of their way of living.

In this beautiful reverie, Parker Palmer imagines a friend who has been walking behind him all the time, calling his name. The inner friend finally has to resort to depression to wake him up to ask himself what he really wants behind all his activities, and to help him realize he isn't alone. It's not the intellectual self or the ethical self or even the spiritual self, but what Thomas Merton calls the True Self. <http://www.dailygood.org/story/1890/that-friend-walking-behind-me-parker-palmer/> **Be The Change:** Is there a friend in you who you aren't paying attention to? You might take a few minutes every day this week, perhaps over a cup of tea or coffee, to listen carefully as you question your longterm goals and perhaps even reframe them in light of who you are today.

Are we losing our humanity? Is humankind becoming humankinda?" In this humorous and insightful video, actor and comedian Sam Richardson explores why we're always in motion, plugged in, and overworked. Through simple breathing practices, and giving ourselves permission to slow down, even to do nothing at all, we can get in touch with what it means to be human. This short video shares more about the power and freedom that comes from simply being. <http://www.karmatube.org/videos.php?id=7064> **Be The Change:** How can you slow down this week, and give yourself more time to relax?

"Maybe we once believed that "straight is the gate and narrow is the way" and went in search of it. But look how Nature moves in curves and curlicues. Perhaps that's why I love the many crooked trees even more than the few arrow-straight ones. They look like they've fought for survival in a tough world. Like you. Like me. Notice how they grow both up and sideways, twisted and curved from battling the wind, the storms, or a gardener's pruning sheers." <http://www.dailygood.org/story/1990/in-praise-of-crooked-things-patty-de-illosa/> **Be The Change:** Does a secret desire to be perfect lurk half-submerged in your unconscious? Do you long to give up some habitual judgmental attitude? The above article invites us to engage actively in questioning ourselves with an open mind and heart. It offers several experiments we could try out as we move along the glorious and crooked path of life. Give one of them a try today.

It is not just recycled packaging or open hiring practices or good benefits or green sourcing that make a sustainable business. It takes a deep commitment to a particular place and substantial effort to weave together all the threads of that place--people, land, and community--to create new economies that can counteract the devastating effects of the global economy. Judy Wicks, owner of White Dog Cafe and founder of BALLE, explains. "When I open my closet door in the morning, I see a sign that says, "Good morning, beautiful business." It's a reminder to me of just how beautiful business can be when we put all our creativity, energy,

and care into producing one product or service in exchange for another. When we think about it, economic exchange can be one of the most meaningful and beautiful interactions among human beings."

<http://www.dailygood.org/story/1969/good-morning-beautiful-business-judy-wicks/>

Be The Change: Make at least one decision today from your sense of place in your community and the ripple effects that decision will have on others in your community.

An early and influential proponent of "Creation Spirituality," which recognizes the Divine in all creation and all creation in the Divine, embracing Buddhism, Judaism, Sufism, and Native American spirituality as well, Episcopalian priest Matthew Fox draws inspiration from the Catholic mystics such as Hildegard of Bingen, Thomas Aquinas, Saint Francis of Assisi, and especially Meister Eckhart. In this interview Fox explains the difference between work, our calling, and a job, which pays our bills. In an ideal situation, one could do both. But you can learn more here about what he calls the spiritual crisis in idleness and the woundedness that can come from work. <http://www.dailygood.org/story/1892/re-inventing-work-an-interview-with-matthew-fox-leslee-goodman/>

Gazi Jalaluddin has a clear vision: a world where no "Gazi" has to stop going to school. Poverty forced him to quit school as a child. He ultimately became a taxi driver in Kolcalata. By asking passengers to donate books, old clothes or medicine, he has helped many children return to their studies. By 2012, Gazi had also created two schools for 425 students and built an orphanage. Gazi's belief in the dignity of work pushed him to teach the young men of his village to drive taxis under the condition they donate a fraction of their earnings and teach two more needy boys. There are now 300 boys from the Sundarbans driving taxis and earning a living in Kolkata. Gazi admits that sometimes he struggles, but he is quick to express his gratitude to the passengers who have helped him achieve his dream. <http://www.dailygood.org/story/1765/the-taxi-driver-who-runs-two-schools-and-an-orphanage-manabi-katoch/> **Be The Change:** What is your dream and how did life's obstacles inspire you?

You have probably heard of a guide dog, but have you ever heard of a guide horse? This series of videos shows that, just like dogs, horses can help people with disabilities to live better lives. They help blind people move around in crowded places, help children to develop balance, and act as a companion for people in need. Enjoy these heart-warming videos! <http://www.karmatube.org/videos.php?id=6480> **Be The Change:** Volunteer some time at your neighborhood animal shelter this week!

In "Of Power and Time" found in "Upstream: Selected Essays," poet Mary Oliver delves deep into the psyche of the artist and explores the external and internal factors affecting creativity. In it she describes three parts of herself -- two ordinary ones, and one third self "where the wellspring of creative energy resides." This third self cannot be controlled, and is often its worst enemy. "What does it have to say? That you must phone the dentist, that you are out of mustard, that your uncle Stanley's birthday is two weeks hence. . . . Then you return to your work, only to find that the imps of idea have fled back into the mist." Here, Brainpickings' Maria Popova masterfully weaves a discourse on creativity's friends and foes using Oliver's brilliant insights as well as quotes and concepts from other artists. Read on for more. <http://www.dailygood.org/story/1989/the-third-self-mary-oliver-on-the-artist-s-task-maria-popova/> **Be The Change:** Click the link below for more wisdom on creativity from Mary Oliver on Brainpickings. <http://www.dailygood.org/more.php?n=7652a>

Mental resources like calm, grit, and courage help us cope with and push through obstacles in our own lives. But how do we cultivate them? The key is knowing how to turn passing experiences into lasting inner resources built into our brains. This skill, positive neuroplasticity, is not a quick fix, but you can change your brain for the better by working it the same way you would work a muscle. As you become more resilient in the face of life's challenges, you move toward greater well-being and away from stress, worry, frustration, and hurt. <http://www.dailygood.org/story/1998/how-to-hardwire-resilience-into-the-brain-rick-hanson-forrest-hanson/> **Be The Change:** Be mindful of which particular needsafety, satisfaction, or connectionis at stake in the challenges of your life. Deliberately call upon your inner strengths related to meeting that need. Then, as you experience mental resources, you can reinforce them in your nervous system.

Whether we acknowledge it or not, every day we stand at the door of death and life. They walk hand in hand. We can't have one without the other, and this is perhaps why Elaine Mansfield could feel both grief and gratitude on the day of her husband's crossing over. She was able to hold in one hand the mystery of loving another human being deeply and being full of gratitude for having shared all that life offered her in that experience, and knowing when it was time to let him go on without her. From this place of deep peace, we can learn from Elaine that life is about living with love in this moment and embracing the gift that this offers even in death. <http://www.dailygood.org/story/1967/when-gratitude-holds-hands-with-grief-elaine-mansfield/> **Be The Change:** Open yourself to gratitude today by having courage and allowing yourself to see how closely life and death walk together as partners in the gift of life.

"We can choose courage or we can choose comfort, but we can't have both. Not at the same time. Vulnerability is not winning or losing; it's having the courage to show up and be seen when we have no control over the outcome. Vulnerability is not weakness; it's our greatest measure of courage." Find out more about the physics of falling down and rising up strong from Brene Brown. <http://www.dailygood.org/story/1973/the-physics-of-vulnerability-brene-brown/> **Be The Change:** Make that phone call, have that talk, reach out to hug her, or sit quietly with another's pain. Risk falling down today whatever that means for you.

"Too many of us fall in the trap of believing that "work is work" and isn't supposed to be a source of happiness, or that work goals will suffer if we focus on what makes us happy. But research suggests the opposite: Happier employees are more productive, benefitting their companies as much as themselves." Annie McKee, an international business advisor and a senior fellow at the University of Pennsylvania shares more in her new book, "How to Be Happy at Work." <http://www.dailygood.org/story/1975/3-ways-you-can-find-more-happiness-at-work-jill-suttie/> **Be The Change:** Take one of the suggestions in the article and try implementing it in your own workplace.

We are discovering that, instead of struggling for meaning and a miracle of survival in a dead Universe, we are being invited to learn and grow forever in the deep ecologies of a living Universe. To step into the invitation of learning to live in a living Universe represents a journey so extraordinary that it invites us to transcend the wounds of history and begin a process of healing and reconciliation to realize a remarkable future we can only attain together. Save and savor this rich, detailed and insightful essay by Duane Elgin, accompanied by stunning photographs by Yuri Beletsky. <http://www.dailygood.org/story/1978/humanity-s-most-urgent-challenge-duane-elgin/> **Be The Change:** Visit NASA's gallery of images from space. Contemplate one image as a portrait of a living being. Then, act from that understanding for the rest of your day.

6. Listening As An Act of Transformation

Reprinted from www.awakin.org.

--by ***Doug Lipman*** (Apr 02, 2018)

Two villagers came to a rabbi with a dispute. When the rabbi invited them to sit down and talk about it, they glowered at each other as though to say, "If you sit down at this table, then I won't!" At last, they sat at the rabbi's table with arms folded, casting angry glances at each other.



Then the rabbi said, "Do you have anything more to say, Shlomo?" Yes, Shlomo asserted, he had more to say. The rabbi kept listening to Shlomo's answers and asking him questions about them until at last Shlomo said, more calmly, "No. I have nothing more to say."

Next, the rabbi turned toward the other villager, Moshe, and asked, "What happened?" The rabbi listened to him and asked him questions until he, too, said, "I have nothing more to say."

The rabbi rose from the table to leave the room, saying, "I will deliberate on this and come back with a decision."

Less than a minute later, the rabbi returned, sat back down at the table, and said, "I have reached my verdict." The rabbi described the verdict to them. Shlomo and Moshe looked at each other and each said, "All right. That solves it." They shook hands and left.

Another man had been in the room and had watched all this. He said to the rabbi, "You found the solution in just a minute. Why did you let them talk so long, when you knew the answer right away?"

The rabbi said, "If I had not listened to each one's full story, each would have resented my decision. It wasn't my judgment that solved the problem. What solved it was listening to their entire stories."

7. Everything Is Waiting For You

Reprinted from www.awakin.org.

--by **David Whyte** (Apr 09, 2018)

Your great mistake is to act the drama
as if you were alone. As if life
were a progressive and cunning crime
with no witness to the tiny hidden
transgressions. To feel abandoned is to deny
the intimacy of your surroundings. Surely,
even you, at times, have felt the grand array;
the swelling presence, and the chorus, crowding
out your solo voice. You must note
the way the soap dish enables you,
or the window latch grants you freedom.
Alertness is the hidden discipline of familiarity.
The stairs are your mentor of things
to come, the doors have always been there
to frighten you and invite you,
and the tiny speaker in the phone
is your dream-ladder to divinity.



Put down the weight of your aloneness and ease into the
conversation. The kettle is singing
even as it pours you a drink, the cooking pots
have left their arrogant aloofness and
seen the good in you at last. All the birds
and creatures of the world are unutterably
themselves. Everything is waiting for you.

8. Seven Stages of the Ego

Reprinted from www.awakin.org.

--by ***Rumi, as told by Elif Shafak (Apr 16, 2018)***

The first stage is the Depraved Ego (Nafs), the most primitive and common state of being, when the soul is entrapped in worldly pursuits. Most human beings are stuck there, struggling and suffering in the service of their ego but always holding others responsible for their continuing unhappiness. If and when a person becomes aware of the ego's abased situation, by starting to work on himself, he can move to the next stage, which in a way is the opposite of the previous one. Instead of blaming other people all the time, the person who has reached this stage blames himself, sometimes to the point of self effacement.



Herein the ego becomes the Accusing Nafs and thus starts the journey toward inner purification.

In the third stage, the person is more mature and the ego has evolved into the Inspired Nafs. It is only at this level, and not anytime before, that one can experience the true meaning of the word "surrender" and roam the Valley of Knowledge. Anyone who has made it this far will possess and display patience, perseverance, wisdom, and humility. The world will feel new and full of inspiration. Nevertheless, many of the people who reach the third level feel an urge to dwell here, losing the will or the courage to go further. That is why, as beautiful and blessed as it is, the third stage is a trap for the one who aims higher.

Those who manage to go further, reach the Valley of Wisdom and come to know the Serene Nafs. Here the ego is not what it used to be, having altered into a high level of consciousness. Generosity, gratitude, and an unwavering sense of contentment regardless of the hardships in life are the main characteristics accompanying anyone who has arrived here.

Beyond that lies the Valley of Unity. Those who are here will be pleased with whatever situation God places them in. Mundane matters make no difference to them, as they have achieved the Pleased Nafs.

In the next stage, the Pleasing Nafs, one becomes a lantern to humanity, radiating energy to everyone who asks for it, teaching and illuminating like a true master. Sometimes such a person can also have healing powers. Wherever he goes, he will make a big difference in other people's lives. In everything he does and aspires to do, his main goal is to serve God through serving others.

Finally, in the seventh stage, one attains the Purified Nafs and becomes Insan-i Kâmil, a perfect human being. But nobody knows much about that state, and even if a few ever did, they wouldn't speak of it.

The stages along the path are easy to summarize, difficult to experience. Adding to the obstacles that appear along the way is the fact that there is no guarantee of continuous progress. The route from the first to the last stage is by no means linear. There is always the danger of tumbling back into earlier stages, sometimes even from a superior stage all the way down to the first one. Given the many traps along the way, it is no wonder that in every century only a few people manage to reach the final stages.

9. Recycling Karmic Trash

Reprinted from www.awakin.org.

--by ***Shinzen Young*** (Apr 23, 2018)

It's very common for people on a meditative or spiritual path to develop a kind of sensitivity to the poison and pain of others. Sometimes it's formulated with the phrase "I pick up all this negativity." Sometimes it's formulated with the phrase "People drain my energy." A closely related perception runs something like this: "Now that I've developed some spiritual maturity, I find it difficult to relate to old friends/family/ordinary people; they so cluelessly cause themselves unneeded suffering; I no longer have much in common with them."

Regarding such sentiments, there are several things to keep in mind. First: They represent a temporary stage that the practitioner eventually grows out of. Second: When you do grow out of it, it's replaced by its exact opposite: the more clueless and messed up people are, the more you enjoy being around them. You can make the transition from that temporary stage to its opposite by realizing this:

When we're around other people, we pick up on where they're at. If they're in a bad place, we pick up on that. One might refer to that as exogenous discomfort. It's discomfort whose origin (genesis) is from the outside (exo), i.e., you're feeling uncomfortable because of what is going on in someone else. The term exogenous contrasts with the term endogenous. Endogenous discomfort is discomfort due to our own stuff. The main point to remember is that the discomfort, endogenous or exogenous, typically comes up as some combination of mental image, mental talk, and emotional body sensation. To the extent that one can experience that sensory arising completely, to that extent it does not cause suffering. It doesn't matter one bit whether the source of suffering is exogenous or endogenous or some combination of both. By "experience it completely" I simply mean experience it mindfully, i.e., experience it in a state of concentration, sensory clarity, and equanimity.

When the discomfort is endogenous and you experience it very mindfully, it doesn't cause much suffering, it "tastes" like you're being purified. When the discomfort is exogenous and you experience it very mindfully, not only does it not cause suffering, but it tastes like you and the other person both are being purified. In other words, how your consciousness processes another's pain subtly teaches that person's consciousness to do the same. The other person may not be aware that's happening, but you're aware of it. You're aware that you are nourishing that person, and that subtly nurtures you. That's why you eventually come to enjoy being around clueless messed up people. Paraphrasing the Blues Brothers, you're "on a secret mission from God." You walk through life like a giant air filter picking up the psychospheric pollution and automatically processing it, extracting from it energy and then radiating that energy as positivity. You know your job and you love it: recycling the karmic trash.

Needless to say, it may take a while to work up to this, but everyone on a path should aspire to this perspective.



This situation contrasts in an interesting way with the goals of psychology. In certain therapeutic approaches, the goal is to get the client to the point where they can distinguish “what’s me” from “what’s them.” In contemplative-based spirituality, the goal is to get to the point where you no longer care about that distinction!

10. Lek Chilert of Elephant Nature Park

Reprinted from www.KarmaTube.org.

What people are exposed to early in their lives can have an impact on their future endeavors. Sangduen "Lek" Chailert grew up with a love of animals, to the point where she was ridiculed for spending time with them. When she was 16, she saw elephants being abused at a logging camp, and she felt compelled to change the way humans and animals interact with each other. She came to the realization that elephants have a right to be on this planet and to not be exploited for human entertainment or profit. Lek founded the Elephant Nature Park in 1996, where elephants live safe and free. Lek employs some people who once abused these beautiful animals and have learned by her example how to care for them with appreciation and respect.

<http://www.karmatube.org/videos.php?id=7989>

11. HumanKinda

Reprinted from www.KarmaTube.org.

"Are we losing our humanity? Is humankind becoming humankinda?" In this humorous and insightful video, actor and comedian Sam Richardson explores why we're always in motion, plugged in, and overworked. Through simple breathing practices, and giving ourselves permission to slow down, even to do nothing at all, we can get in touch with what it means to be human. Click play to learn more about the power and freedom that comes from simply being. <http://www.karmatube.org/videos.php?id=7064>

12. The Story of Kaveri (and Every River Everywhere)

Reprinted from www.KarmaTube.org.

Wonder how a river came to flow? Wonder what keeps her going? This story, from the perspective of the river Kaveri in India, is a story of rivers everywhere. Where forests grow, rivers flow. When forests die, rivers go dry. The only way to revive rivers is to bring back the forests that we have lost, and protect the forests that we have left. Forests store and release water more effectively and efficiently than any manmade dam or canal. And every tree helps grow a forest. Let there be forests. Let there be water. <http://www.karmatube.org/videos.php?id=8055>

13. Paint the World

Reprinted from www.KarmaTube.org.

There is no better time to paint the world with joy than today, Blake Grigsby reminds us in this inspiring video. In a time when we are surrounded with horrific headlines, Blake encourages us to bring color to "this bleached landscape" with simple acts of kindness. Choose joy everyday! Smile at strangers, tell people you love them and share compliments. These small acts of generosity ripple outward endlessly and revitalize our world. <http://www.karmatube.org/videos.php?id=7217>

HEART AND SOUL ADVERTISEMENTS:

Consistent with Spiritual Guidance's philosophy, mission and vision (refer to <http://www.servingyourjourney.com/about.html> for more details) Spiritual Guidance offers free advertising in this e-newsletter to those persons and organizations interested in promoting their spiritual-related products, services or events. If you do choose to advertise in this e-newsletter, Spiritual Guidance requests you submit your text ad (no graphics please) to newsletter@servingyourjourney.com by the 25th of the month, for distribution in the following month's e-newsletter.

14. Sacred Attention Therapy

Sacred Attention Therapy (SAT) references the etymological meaning of therapy: "attending to soul". SAT is a new paradigm of psychological and spiritual growth and development and is based on Richard Harvey's ground-breaking approach to depth psychotherapy, and on his 3-stage model of human awakening (<http://www.therapyandspirituality.com/>). This new paradigm of psychotherapy / counselling is an approach that takes into account the ego-based individual and the desire of the individual to grow spiritually. SAT recognizes the fundamental, true, spiritual nature of humanity and the intense longing for the truth about our real, divine state. SAT involves listening with the whole self to the soul of the other. This is what therapy should always be, or at least always aim at, because this is the profound depth of healing and reverence which two gathered together in search of truth can bring about. For more information about SAT, visit these websites:

<http://www.servingyourjourney.com/Sacred-Attention-Therapy.html>

Sessions can be offered in person, by phone, or via Skype. For more information about booking appointments, please visit <http://www.servingyourjourney.com/Booking-Appointments.html>. To schedule an appointment, please contact me by phone (613-204-0299) or email (rmeagher@servingyourjourney.com).

15. A Course in Miracles Global Community Centre

Spiritual Guidance is honored to host the 'A Course in Miracles (ACIM) Global Community Centre.' This Centre is a meeting place for ACIM students and teachers from around the world to access coaching counselling, therapy, study and discussion groups, courses, a community café for you to communicate with other students and teachers, and helpful resources and links. Visit the ACIM Global Community Centre at <http://www.servingyourjourney.com/ACIM.html>.

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Page | 18

In love, gratitude, compassion and forgiveness...

Rev. Robert Meagher

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